

## DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

### BOARD MEETING MINUTES FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2013

#### DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Sandra Edwards  
Bill Johnson  
Basil Julian  
Irma Nelson  
Terry Sheeler  
Dickie Walker

#### EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Kara Aaron  
Jim Carey  
Jim Hill  
Sandy Rowland for Harold Brewer

#### DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Teresa Doan

#### EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Larry Dickerson

DHS Representative: None

Attorney General's Office Representative: KaTina Hodge

Governor's Office Representative: None

DSB Staff Present: Tony Brown, Charlie Cain-Davis, Kandy Cayce, Chris Dean, Mary Douglas, Lilian Felicitas, Lisa Fore, Rhonda Garmon, Linda Haynes, Christy Lamas, Mona Mason, Katy Morris, Debra Newton, Jim Pearson, Judith Renick, Terry Ross, Kena Sabb, Tina Shelby, Lou Talley, Jessie Thomas, Coral Virden, Elizabeth Whitaker, Cassandra Williams

**CALL TO ORDER.** Acting Chairman Ms. Sandra Edwards called the meeting to order.

**ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN** – Mr. Dickie Walker made a motion to elect Mrs. Terry Sheeler as the Board Chairman. Mr. Basil Julian seconded the motion. Motion Passed. Terry Sheeler made a motion to elect Dickie Walker as the Vice-Chairman. Ms. Irma Nelson seconded the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** Motion was made by Irma Nelson to approve the agenda. Dickie Walker seconded the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**RECOGNITION OF FORMER BOARD MEMBERS** – Acting Chairman Sandra Edwards recognized former Chairman and board member, Mr. Gerald Carr and former board member, Mr. Gary Hall by presenting each with a plaque recognizing their leadership and dedication as members of the DSB Board. Gerald Carr expressed his appreciation for the time he served on the board and pledged that, if at any time in the future he could be of assistance, the board and agency should feel free to call him.

Former board member, Ms. Angyln Young was unable to attend the meeting and presentation of her recognition award will be set at a future time.

**APPROVAL OF 06/14/13 MINUTES.** Motion was made by Dickie Walker to approve the June 14, 2013 minutes. Irma Nelson seconded the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**INTRODUCTIONS.** All persons in attendance introduced themselves.

## **DSB DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **NATIONAL ISSUES:**

Senate Bill 1356 – There is a lot happening in congress. If approved, Senate Bill 1356 would move Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor. It also establishes an Independent Living Administration (ILA), and splits the Older Blind Program (OIB) away from RSA to the new ILA. A coalition of agencies and organizations is working together to try to get a conforming amendment applied to S1356 to eliminate the transfer of OIB, but this legislation seems to be on a fast track. Very likely, the organizations will not be able to stop the move from RSA to Labor, but retaining OIB within Rehab Services is more likely. Many agencies for the blind are concerned that the transfer to Labor might mar the relationship with Department of Education and negatively affect transition students.

Another part of S1356 would water down the comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD), one of the chief principles of RSA. It eliminates the mandate that Rehab Counselors possess a Masters of Rehabilitation Counseling or academic equivalent and substitutes a wide array of non-rehab degrees, such as general business.

S1356 would also downgrade the reporting level of the Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services Administration, Janet LaBreck. Commissioner LaBreck currently reports directly to the president. Under S1356 currently proposed, she would answer to one of the president's subordinates within the Department of Labor. Right now the coalition is writing a joint letter to try and argue these points, and time will tell if it has any effect.

Randolph-Sheppard – Blind agencies are perceiving a little improvement on the Randolph-Sheppard front, in that we are now receiving some timely information on vending opportunities with various larger federal agencies. This has followed actions by RSA, lawsuits, pushes by states, and a memo from the President.

Meeting Representation – This is the time of year that we will be preparing to go to the Council of State Administrators in Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and National Council of State Agencies for the Blind semi-annual meetings. Prior to the CSAVR meeting, the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) also meets. DSB has been represented in the past by staff members, but it is really supposed to be represented by a member of the DSB 'Rehabilitation Council' or Commission, meaning Board Meeting Minutes

the board of DSB. The next meeting will be November 9 and 10 and I would like for this board to consider naming a board representative to attend, sponsored by the division.

STATE:

Impact of a Restructure – In the event of national legislation moving RSA into the Department of Labor, I do not anticipate that it would affect DSB structure within the Department of Human Services immediately. The federal change would take a little while, and it could be three to five years down the road before the board is faced with the situation of division transfer to a new department and whether the board retains its governing authority.

Partners – We are continuing to work with our state Independent Living Council, which actually meets Monday. The department is still working with the Association of People in Supportive Employment (APSE). We continue working with the school districts. Our counselors are still identified members of the local Workforce Investment Boards, as required under the Workforce Act. We are working with our partner agencies: World Services for the Blind, Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Lighthouse for the Blind. DSB is able to multiply the impact of its services by joining with our partner agencies and organizations.

The board voted unanimously to authorize the board Chair to select a board member to attend the NCSRC conference held semi-annually in conjunction with CSAVR. ***Motion passed.***

DSB:

Field Services Update – Field Services Administrator, Christy Lamas reported 19 students participated in Jump Start this year. She noted that the number of supportive employment cases has increased. DSB has a total of 296 successful closures to date for the federal fiscal year. We are well above where we were last year at this time. We have 15 percent homemakers and our ceiling is 20% in that area. DSB will exceed last year's goals by September 30, 2013. The division began its series of Rehab Teacher trainings on assistive technology instruction June 14. It is a six month program. Instead of having consumers from around the state come to Little Rock for basic assistive technology instruction, DSB will be able to send Rehab Teachers to the consumer. The agency is also moving to a new database system in January 2014. The recent Parent Summit for transition age youth and their families was a success and the speakers were well received.

DCO Call Center – We are continuing to work with the DHS Division of County Operations (DCO) regarding the call center in Batesville. They have identified job titles that can be done by properly trained persons with vision impairment and have reserved slots for DSB consumers. We are in the process of getting access to application screens, so the training can be designed and conducted. There are three different jobs that consumers could secure, depending on their education, experience and skill.

Board Meeting Minutes

Training – We just completed leadership training in Oklahoma, known as “WINGS” - Wicked Innovations for Next Generation Solutions. DSB had three staff members who just graduated: Tanya VanHouten, Jo Ann McAdoo and Amy Jackson. In other training areas, DSB is bringing in Dr. Karen Wolffe, a nationally known authority on the employment of people with disabilities, to provide training at the Field Services meeting in December.

Update on Data System - AWARE – Assistant Director Cassondra Williams gave an update on AWARE. All field services, finance staff, and some of the support staff are getting training on the new system and hopefully by January everyone will be very familiar, so we can move forward in implementing the system.

Recruitment - In regards to recruitment, we are doing very well. We have had turnover in some of our support positions, but they are being advertised. We welcome all applicants.

Federal Reporting of Indirect Cost - CFO Lilian Felicitas has worked very hard with DHS Finance to properly identify DSB indirect cost. It had been a huge problem for DHS and we identified those problems with them. DSB is again on track to meet our MOE (Maintenance of Effort) or matching requirements.

#### END OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT

REPORT OF EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR (EOY) SUBCOMMITTEE – The winner of DSB 2013 Employee of the Year for Clerical Services was Lisa Fore. The winner of the award for Direct Services was Tanya VanHouten, and the winner of the award for Administrative Services was Kena Sabb-Moore. The DSB staff member selected as Overall Winner as DSB 2013 Employee of the Year was Lisa Fore.

BOARD VOTE ON SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – The Acting Board Chairman made a motion to accept the recommendations from the subcommittee for the Employee of the Year. ***Motion passed.***

ORIENTATION OF NEW MEMBERS – The Acting Chairman welcomed new Board members: Terry Sheeler, representing NFB; Sandra Edwards, reappointed as the ACB representative; Basil Julian, representing Arkansas Lions; and Bill Johnson, representing AER. Ex-Officio Board member, Harold Brewer, representing the Arkansas Association of Blind Business Enterprise Managers was absent. Sandy Rowland represented the Association on behalf of Mr. Brewer. A two-hour orientation will be held for board members at a future point in time. The board members will be contacted for possible dates convenient to them.

PLANS FOR DECEMBER BOARD MEETING IN CONJUNCTION WITH DSB STATEWIDE MEETING – The December board meeting will be held at 10 a.m. at one of the local hotels in Little Rock and adjourn to the recognition luncheon.

2013 ACB NATIONAL CONVENTION REPORT – Sandra Edwards reported that the ACB convention was held in Columbus, Ohio July 4-12, and she expressed her appreciation to the Board for sponsoring her attendance. She said there was a good turnout with very interesting speakers. A report was submitted with the board packet. The convention in 2014 will be in Las Vegas.

2013 NFB NATIONAL CONVENTION REPORT – Terry Sheeler reported that the NFB convention was held in Orlando, Florida, July 1-7. It was attended by blind consumers, their families, and friends. A report was submitted with the board packet. The convention in 2014 will again be in Orlando.

DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER (DRC) REPORT – No representative was present. No report was submitted.

ARKANSAS INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (AILC) REPORT – Sha Stevens spoke about Disability Awareness Day at the Capitol. A report was submitted with the board packet and is attached as a formal part of these minutes.

CONSUMER INPUT – None given apart from the above.

SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING – December 13, 2013, at 10:00 a.m. (Location to be determined) followed by the celebration of the DSB Consumer of the Year, DSB Employee of the Year, and the Division's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR ANNUAL EVALUATION OF DSB DIRECTOR – (Annual Evaluation of DSB Director)

RECONVENE – The Acting Board Chairman reported that the DSB Board had completed the annual evaluation of the DSB Director and the board thought the Director does a fine and outstanding job. Mrs. Morris will secure the signatures and submit the evaluation form to complete the process.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Edwards  
Secretary